

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 639

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the Help to the Smokies Volunteer Team on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary of serving Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to one of the finest examples of volunteerism in the Volunteer State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Bob Presley, an employee at Oak Ridge's Y-12 Plant, was asked to organize and facilitate a group of volunteers from the employee ranks who would be willing to spend some of their Saturdays cleaning up, repairing, and maintaining picnic areas in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP); and

WHEREAS, twenty years later, a new generation of volunteers and some of the originals are still the unsung heroes of the park under the continuing leadership of Bob Hawthorne and Al Roberson, the current Help to the Smokies Volunteer Team coordinator; and

WHEREAS, the first Help to the Smokies Volunteer Day in April 1996 attracted 125 volunteers who helped replace decayed wood on picnic tables and constructed frames around the table areas, in addition to performing general cleanup and painting of trash containers in the Metcalf Bottoms picnic area; five years of volunteer service days later, 235 picnic area sites were finally completed; and

WHEREAS, the volunteer mantra early on was: "We will drive the miles to volunteer and work for food." Also early on, it became obvious that GSMNP didn't have an adequate budget to buy needed materials, so for many years, Lockheed Martin Corporation donated thousands of dollars annually for the purchase of materials installed by the volunteers, and BWXT Y-12, B&W Y-12, and Consolidated Nuclear Services, succeeding government contractors at Y-12, have continued to support the volunteers' efforts; and

WHEREAS, GSMNP areas benefiting from Help to the Smokies Volunteer Team efforts are the Metcalf Bottoms, Cosby, Cades Cove, and Chimneys picnic areas and the Cosby, Cades Cove, and Elkmont campgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the Y-12 volunteer team has completed two other significant construction projects: the orientation shelter at the entrance to the Cades Cove Loop and two ADA handicap-accessible campsites at Cades Cove Campground, the latter of which projects was recognized by the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Department of the Interior; and

WHEREAS, the team's work has also been recognized by NPS Director Robert Stanton and was honored with Vice President Al Gore's "Hammer Award" in 2001, and Help to the Smokies has earned the everlasting gratitude and respect of the management and staff of GSMNP; and

WHEREAS, in addition to these laudable volunteer efforts, the Y-12 Plant stored over 70,000 Native American artifacts from the GSMNP in a secure vault for nearly twenty years until the new NPS facility to house the artifacts was built in Townsend; and

WHEREAS, the twentieth anniversary of Help to the Smokies happily coincides with the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, and the first volunteer workday to celebrate the team's twentieth anniversary year is April 16, 2016, at the Elkmont campground and picnic area; and

WHEREAS, the volunteer spirit that is woven into the fabric of the culture of the Y-12 National Security facility in Oak Ridge and the plant's patriotic mission of supporting the defense of our country combined to create the Help to the Smokies Volunteer Team, which has supported GSMNP in a wide range of repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance activities for twenty years, and these outstanding public servants are most deserving of our approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that on the occasion of the team's twentieth anniversary, we honor and

commend the coordinators and volunteers of the Help to the Smokies Volunteer Team, both past and present, for their hard work and enduring commitment to helping restore, rehabilitate, and maintain Great Smoky Mountains National Park so that present and future generations may continue to enjoy the many bounties of nature and extend to these special people our best wishes for much continued success and happiness in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.